



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

To: NOS Senior Management Council

From: Geospatial Data Synergy Project Team  
Millington Lockwood, Chair

Subject: Geospatial Data Synergy Project Status Report

Representatives of all NOS line offices and staff from the Coastal Services Center, Special Projects and the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services met on 9/2 and 9/3 in Silver Spring to discuss and agree upon the ways in which the three synergy projects relating to spatial data could be addressed. It was a productive session. The group has tentatively put these projects under an umbrella "Geospatial Data Synergy Project." The merged effort would address spatial data infrastructure enhancement, the development of a coastal/marine GIS, and the development of shoreline digital data. The meeting was chaired by Millington Lockwood (Coast Survey) and facilitated and supported by Tim Goodspeed and Dave Lott (Special Projects). The group has agreed to cooperate on the development of a report that will outline the steps necessary to move the synergy project forward. This report should be available for review by the Senior Management Council next month. Some of the results of the meeting follow. A more detailed summary of the session will soon be posted on the web.

**Project Mission** - The group has drafted a mission statement to provide themselves and others with an idea of where NOS should be headed with regard to spatial data.

"Establish a system of people, protocols, and capabilities that efficiently collects, locates and delivers timely, useful, relevant, and accurate digital spatial data to customers via user-friendly technology."





**Operating Principles** - The group has identified some principles to help bound the effort and establish a foundation for the work to come. (numbers are not intended to indicate any priority)

"NOS will .....

1. Identify and commit the resources necessary to achieve success
2. Identify its role vis a vis other coastal data providers (NOS vs. other govt. and private)
3. decentralize responsibility where possible
4. make access to data and services user-friendly and with limited exceptions, free of charge
5. have continuity of purpose and knowledge on this effort by establishing a coordinating body or group
6. meet the requirements of Executive Order 12906
7. make data available in formats compatible with customer needs
8. design and implement NOS data acquisition and processing activities to ensure a continued flow of near real time, "certified" and historical information into the "system"
9. work across NOS offices to achieve common NOS goals and foster intra-NOS cooperation

**The Challenges** - The group has identified many issues that must be faced as this effort moves forward. Some of the most critical are listed below. (numbers are not intended to indicate any priority)

1. Getting a clear understanding of customers, both internal and external to NOS and their needs
2. Understanding what assets (data, people, capabilities) we have across NOS
2. Deciding where leadership for this topic should reside and what its charter should be
3. Changing some traditional ways of acquiring, processing and delivering data and metadata
4. Rewarding/acknowledging NOS "Team" participation
5. Properly documenting data to promote its availability to search engines and its potential for evaluation for appropriate use





6. Making the distributed delivery system "seamless" to users
7. Deciding the coverages, spatial and attribute reliabilities and accuracies, and spatial scales to include
8. Getting data to a consistent and software friendly format
9. Maintaining the delivery "system", the data and metadata
10. Getting the basic framework of the system "running" and generating proof of concept synthesis products out ASAP.
11. Educate NOS about the projects and data to be included in the Coastal/Marine GIS so that project-wide decisions can be made more readily with regard to all themes.

The implementation discussion highlighted the need to develop "**Building Blocks**" or programmatic "thrusts" that needed to be pursued to support the NOS Spatial Data Infrastructure. These Building Blocks include: (note with a little bit of re-casting these can be articulated as "objectives" vs. Building Blocks)

- A. Assessment Block: Determine NOS's assets (data, expertise, hardware, software) that can contribute to the NOS Spatial Data Mission
- B. Housekeeping Block: Ensure these assets are useful and available to all customers
- C. Clearinghouse Block: Build a structure/system to ensure that these assets are distributed
- D. Help and Support Block: Develop a mechanism to provide technical assistance to the Coastal Geospatial Data Community
- E. Coordinating/facilitating block: Establish a group to move this effort forward and continue its development by identifying funding sources external to NOS, facilitating inter-line organization collaboration, helping set priorities, and maintaining communication with NOS management





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**Next Steps:** The Group will prepare a final report to the SMC that will:

1. Examine, evaluate and prioritize NOS geospatial data Challenges
2. Review NOS Geospatial Data Operating Principles vis a vis NOS Business Plan and/or Strategic Plan/ or IT Plan. Articulate Program objectives and activities for the NOS AOP.
3. Inventory NOS's geospatial data assets that contribute to the above stated mission
4. Identify NOS Geospatial Data Leadership, NOS's role in the NSDI, and develop a charter for a NOS Geospatial Data coordination/facilitation Group
5. Recommend marine Geospatial data potential "successes" that are underway or will be completed within a year and incorporate these into the NOS Annual Operating Plan.

We anticipate that this final report will be available on October 5, 1998.

